

Washington poised to up organic fees, mostly on small producers

Agency set to adopt new logo

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Washington organic farmers and ranchers with modest sales likely will pay higher fees to have their products certified by the state Department of Agriculture beginning early next year.

The department says it spends more money evaluating organic producers than the current fees raise. The department proposes to close the gap with a rate structure that moves away from basing fees on gross sales.

Instead farms would pay



Washington State Department of Agriculture

The label affixed to organic products in Washington includes an image of George Washington. It may not much longer as the state Department of Agriculture develops a more distinctive logo.

the same first-time application and inspection fees, regardless of size. Large producers

would still pay more because an annual fee to renew certification would be based on revenue.

But while most larger producers would see modest increases in fees, many small producers would pay nearly double.

The department said it evaluated 176 farms in 2017 with less than \$15,000 in income from organic sales. In most cases, the farms paid the minimum fee of \$220 for certification. Such farms will now pay a \$375 inspection fee, plus a \$137 renewal fee. The fee for first-time applicants for all farms would be \$375. The application fee is now \$250.

The department's organic

program supervisor, Brenda Book, said the new schedule will better reflect the time the agency spends certifying farms and processors.

"A small operation can be quite complicated and take a long time," she said. "The reality is we don't have a shorter or more abbreviated inspection we can do."

The agriculture department certifies more than 1,100 organic producers in Washington. The voluntary program allows producers to market their products as certified organic.

The department hasn't made a major restructuring of fees in more than 30 years. Along with new fees, the department proposes to

adopt a new logo to affix to organic products. The department plans to replace the current logo that depicts George Washington with a design that features leaves.

Designing a schedule that bills each producer for the department's exact costs would have been too complicated, Book said. "We want to focus on organic certification, not an administrative evaluation of fees," she said.

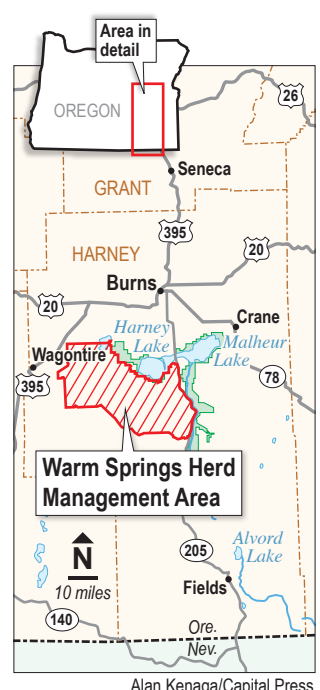
The department checked 1,123 organic producers in 2017, according to an agency filing. Producers paid an average of \$2,295 in fees, bringing into the department nearly \$2.6 million. If the proposed fees had been in place, producers would have paid an av-

erage of \$2,853, which totals \$3.2 million.

The department will have two public hearings on the rates: 10 a.m. Nov. 28 in Olympia at the Natural Resources Building, conference room 259; 1111 Washington St. SE; and 1 p.m. Nov. 30 in Yakima at the department's office, 21 North First Avenue.

Written Comments on the proposal are due by Nov. 30. To comment by mail, write to Henri Gonzales, Agency Rules Coordinator, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560. Send email comments to wdsarulscments@agr.wa.gov.

The department tentatively plans to have the new fees in place by Jan. 14.



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

WSDA snares Asian gypsy moth; egg hunt is on

No decision on spraying yet

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

A rare Asian gypsy moth was trapped recently near Lake Martha in Snohomish County, only the second time in the past two decades that the more-dangerous kin to the European gypsy moth has been found in the state.

Even one Asian gypsy moth could be reason enough to spray pesticide over the area, though the state Department of Agriculture has not made a decision, department spokeswoman Karla Salp said Monday.

In all, the department trapped 52

gypsy moths in 10 counties, all west of the Cascades. Aside from the one in Snohomish County, the trapped gypsy moths were of the European strain.

The department trapped nine in a neighborhood north of Bremerton, eight near a boat launch on Orcas Island, seven near Ames Lake in Redmond and four along Lake Symington in Kitsap County.

The department is hunting for egg masses in those areas to confirm the pests are reproducing and to pinpoint the outbreak, Salp said. Egg masses are difficult to find.

The department has trapped at least one European gypsy moth ever year since 1977. The European strain got

lost in 1869 in Medford, Mass., and is now established in 20 states. The pest defoliates 500,000 to 1 million acres of forest land a year, according to the USDA.

The Asian strain of gypsy moth has not gotten a foothold in the U.S., but is considered potentially more dangerous because it can spread faster. The females, as well as the males, fly. Female European gypsy moths are flightless.

In 2015, the agriculture department trapped 10 Asian gypsy moths at six locations. The following spring, the department responded by spraying a total of 10,500 acres. Asian gypsy moths have not been found in those areas since. The department had previously

trapped an Asian gypsy moth in 1999.

The gypsy moth catch this year was modest compared to some previous years. The department trapped a gypsy moth in Bangor, the site of a Naval base on the Kitsap Peninsula, where the department sprayed last spring.

The department did not trap any gypsy moths in a Pierce County neighborhood where the department also sprayed.

The agriculture department will decide in December or January whether to spray any areas next spring when caterpillars emerge. The department typically contracts with an aviation company to spray *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki*, or Btk.

Wild horse sterilization blocked by judge

Lawsuit challenges experiment with ovary removal

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

An experiment aimed at sterilizing mares from a herd of wild horses rounded up in Eastern Oregon last month has now been blocked by a federal judge.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management had gathered more than 800 horses from the Warm Springs herd management area in October, with plans to return about 200 to range after half the females had their ovaries removed.

Wild horse populations are a point of contention in the area, as ranchers say they cause resource damage that leads to cattle grazing restrictions.

U.S. District Judge Michael Mosman in Portland agreed to enter a preliminary injunction against the experiment on Nov. 2, though the court docket doesn't explain his reasons for the ruling.

According to the plaintiffs — including the Animal Welfare Institute, American Wild Horse Campaign and the Cloud Foundation — the judge agreed that their free speech rights would be violated if BLM excluded them from watching the sterilization procedures.

Mosman also found it was "arbitrary and capricious" for BLM not to study the social acceptability of the experiment, as planned during an earlier study, the plaintiffs said.

"Hopefully, BLM will rethink their decision to move forward with the most inhumane and impractical management tool imaginable," said Ginger Kathrens, the Cloud Foundation's executive director, in a statement.

Tara Thissell, public affairs specialist for BLM, confirmed the injunction has prohibited the spaying portion of the study, which will be put on hold pending the outcome of the litigation.

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MF 8660
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Case 305
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JD 2210
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38' 6" 3 section, 40' Harrow, #760005 -Located in Hillsboro

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KU L6060D
2015

Cab, Hydro Trans, Loader, 138-hrs, #60D31089 -Located in Donald

\$45,500



LA VT7431
2013

26'3", 22" blades, 13'7" transport width, #J1203522 -Located in Harrisburg

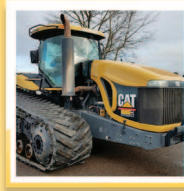
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Case SPX213
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80' Booms, Poly Tank Hyd Tread adj, 2500-hrs, #G0002561 -Located in McMinnville

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CAT MT865
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36" Belts, Bareback, PS Trans, 5085-hrs, #BDS40713 -Located in Tangent

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